

and the like; that it removes entirely the element of "competition"; that it makes the various departments of the church's work support and help each other; that it presents the different causes as so many units in a system which has a common end; and that it is thoroughly practical and practicable. Those who have attended the meetings of the General Assembly will appreciate the fact that any system that will lessen a certain measure of competition between the different causes is much to be desired. The multiplication of objects of general benevolence, growing naturally out of the enlargement and development of the church, emphasizes the demand for some method by which each added unit will help rather than hinder the work, and by which all appearance of "scrambling" may be avoided.

### ANSWERED PRAYER.

The announcement made upon the authority of cable despatches that Rev. W. H. Sheppard, of our Congo Mission, has been acquitted of charges made by the Belgian government, has been received with delight by our people. The charges against Dr. Morrison were withdrawn some weeks ago. It was fully expected by our Secretaries and the Executive Committee, and by Mr. Sheppard himself, that in the ordinary course of events, the trial would result in a verdict sustaining the government's charges—an unjust verdict indeed, but one of immense consequence to the oppressive policy of the government. Its reputation before the world and its oft repeated protestations of innocence were at stake. All this appears to have been forfeited in the final outcome.

It may be remembered that the last General Assembly appealed to the Church to give itself to earnest prayer in behalf of these brethren. During the sessions of the Assembly many supplications were offered in their behalf. Special interest in the case was taken by a number of other ecclesiastical bodies and executive boards; notably the Northern Presbyterian, the Southern Methodist, the Episcopal, the Congregational, the Baptist and probably others. Sympathy was expressed, co-operation was generously rendered and prayer was offered. And now we learn that the desire of many hearts in this and other lands has been fulfilled.

An unsympathetic and ungrateful naturalism will say that the results would have been the same had no prayer been offered. A reverent and grateful manhood and womanhood everywhere may say, "The Lord is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength in whom I will trust; my buckler and the horn of my salvation, and my high tower."

That the result has been attained through ordinary human instrumentalities in no respect impairs the fact of God's immanence in the affairs of his Church, his guidance toward the great ends which he has fore-ordained. This is God's way of subduing all things, unto himself and maturing his redeemed Kingdom.

We remember that when Peter was delivered from prison in answer to the prayers of the little company of believers, they were astonished when they knew that their prayers were answered. Their faith was genuine but they did not realize how freely and

graciously God would hear their plea. It honors our Lord for us to recognize his presence and his control in the affairs of the Church and of the individual life.

Is it not true of our Lord's disciples today that they are slow of vision in discerning the Master's presence, and hesitant of utterance in saying, "It is the Lord?" There are many Bethels where his people may declare, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I knew it not."

### THE POOR AND FOREIGN MISSIONS.

In the "Abilene News" there has appeared a paragraph of such foolishness as to astound us.

It says that "Recently a Baptist preacher of Atlanta published a statement to the effect that there were in a short distance from the church, four or five thousand white folks who were too destitute to dress so that they could come to church. The following Sunday an eloquent secretary of a foreign missionary society in this same church, raised \$11,000 for foreign hospitals, dispensaries, asylums, secular schools, kindergartens and bribed converts." And it asks: "How do you suppose the poor people of Atlanta feel about it?"

We do not question these statements in themselves. But its author is too ignorant of facts to be able to argue sensibly.

1. Doubtless there are four or five thousand people in Atlanta who can not dress as they would wish for an appearance at church. But do these people wish to go to church? Would they go if we should dress them up ever so finely? That which hinders them from church-going is not lack of dress, but lack of desire. The argument therefore is not true.

2. Between the appeal for money to relieve bodily discomfort, and for money to save the soul from hell, there is no comparison. If the one or the other must needs be omitted, by all means let us save the soul. But the one does not exclude the other. The men who give freely for missions are the men who give to relieve the distressed.

3. The people who talk in this way about foreign mission work do not know anything about the condition of men in heathen lands. In northern China when the temperature is down toward zero, the average laborer has only straw with which to warm. He puts it into a clay oven, and lies down on the top of his oven as the only way to keep warm. In middle China where ice is often seen, the average man has absolutely no fire to warm his dwelling. The best that he has is a charcoal footstove, on which to place his feet, or a charcoal can to hold within his hands, to keep them from freezing. Without glass in their windows, and without a warming stove in their houses, they shield themselves by multiplied thickness of bed-quilt garments.

And their food is likewise stinted. A native of India or China counts a one-cent breakfast or a one-cent dinner, abundant, and the average of them live on meals that cost only half a cent. Poverty! No one in this country can conceive of the poverty of heathen lands. The field negroes of the South, in comparison with idolaters, are rich. When such poverty as we have described, is realized, no wonder that noble men will subscribe for its relief. And when they realize that it is the result of sin and idolatry, no wonder that they gave freely to overcome the idolatry and sin.